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## **Secretary of State Alex Padilla Statement on Unofficial Ballot Drop Boxes**

**SACRAMENTO, CA** – California Secretary of State Alex Padilla issued the following statement in response to reports of unauthorized drop boxes.

"The California Republican Party is saying one thing in the press and another through their attorneys.

"They have agreed that they will not use the unstaffed, unsecured, ballot drop boxes that are misleadingly labeled to look official. Their public statements are simply meant to deflect from what they have to agreed to in writing.

"The CRP is trying to confuse the use of boxes to briefly store ballots - collected by a person a voter has designated to return their ballot, and who has followed chain of custody protocols - with misleading drop boxes they have been caught deploying.

"In addition, the CRP and the county GOP parties in Fresno, Los Angeles and Orange County have not fully responded to the Cease & Desist letter. There are still outstanding questions about the scope and practices of the Republican Party's misleading ballot collection operation. That is why the Attorney General is issuing subpoenas to compel further information. Reports of unofficial drop boxes in counties in addition to Fresno, Los Angeles, and Orange, and the CRP's refusal to answer basic questions around the location and amount of misleading ballot drop boxes is problematic. As a result, this investigation will remain on-going, and we will take further legal action as necessary.

"State law is clear—anyone who is collecting and returning a voter's ballot must put their name, signature, and relationship to the voter on the return envelope. Failure to comply with chain of custody requirements will not invalidate the ballot, however, because citizens should not lose their voting rights as the result of ineptitude or unlawfulness of a political operative or campaign volunteer. If a person who has been designated by a voter to return their ballot fails or neglects that responsibility, they can face serious legal consequences.

"California voters, you have full control over how you return your ballot. Elections officials have worked tirelessly—during a pandemic—to provide you multiple safe, secure options for voting:

- You can use the prepaid postage return envelope.

- You can return it to an official, secure ballot drop box.
- You can deliver it in person to your county elections office or a polling location on or before Election Day.
- And if you want to have someone you trust return your ballot—that is your right.

"The CA Republican Party can engage in campaign activities and ballot collection—but they have to play by the rules."

